

# Central United Methodist Church

3700 Pacific Avenue, Stockton, CA 95204

## ORDER OF WORSHIP

Ecumenical Sunday

Sunday, January 21, 2024



\*Indicates please stand as you are able.

### GATHERING

#### PRELUDE

*Arabesque No. 1*  
(Claude Debussy)

Monica Adams

#### GATHERING MOMENT

Alexis Easton (8:30am), June Sullivan (11:00am)

#### \*CALL TO WORSHIP (From Wesley's Covenant Prayer)

Alexis Easton (8:30am), June Sullivan (11:00am)

**Leader:** Have mercy on us, O God, according to your unfailing love.

**All:** **Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.**

**Leader:** Restore to us the joy of your salvation and grant us a willing spirit to sustain us.

**All:** **Open my lips, Lord, and my mouth will declare your praise. Amen.**

#### \*HYMN

*For the Healing of the Nations*

UMH #428

#### CHILDREN'S MOMENT

Rev. Sungho Lee

#### MISSION & MINISTRIES MOMENT

Alexis Easton (8:30am), June Sullivan (11:00am)

#### PRAYER CARDS COLLECTED

#### RITE OF FRIENDSHIP AND A SPECIAL WELCOME TO OUR VISITORS

Alexis Easton (8:30am)  
June Sullivan (11:00am)

**\*PASSING THE PEACE** Alexis Easton (8:30am), June Sullivan (11:00am)  
(Stand, bow or wave, with the word "Peace be with You!")

**All Sing:** *Hymn of Promise* verse 1  
*In the bulb there is a flower; in the seed, an apple tree; in cocoons, a hidden promise: butterflies will soon be free! In the cold and snow of winter there's a spring that waits to be, unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.*

**ANTHEM** *Follow Me* Chancel Choir  
by John Carter

**PROCLAMATION AND RESPONSE**

**SCRIPTURE** Mark 1:14-20 (Pew Bible NRSV, page) Alexis Easton (8:30am)  
Leader: This is the word of God for the people of God. June Sullivan (11:00am)  
**All:** Thanks be to God.

**\*HYMN** *Lord, You Have Come to the Lakeshore* UMH #344

**SERMON** "I will Show you how to Fish for People" Rev. Sungho Lee

**PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE** Alexis Easton (8:30am), June Sullivan (11:00am)

**PASTOR'S PRAYER & LORD'S PRAYER** Rev. Sungho Lee  
Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

**THANKSGIVING**

**WORSHIP WITH OUR TITHES & OFFERINGS** Alexis Easton (8:30am), June Sullivan (11:00am)

**OFFERTORY** *Light Dawns on a Weary World* Monica Adams  
(Nancy Raabe)

**\*DOXOLOGY** *For the Beauty of the Earth* verse 6 UMH #92  
*For thyself, best Gift Divine, to the world so freely given,  
for that great, great love of thine, peace on earth, and joy in heaven:  
Lord of all, to thee we raise this our hymn of grateful praise.*

**PRAYER OF DEDICATION** Alexis Easton (8:30am), June Sullivan (11:00am)

**SENDING FORTH**

**\*BENEDICTION** Rev. Sungho Lee

**\*RESPONSE** *Shalom to You* UMH #666  
*Shalom to you now, shalom, my friends.  
May God's full mercies bless you, my friends.  
In all your living and through your loving,  
Christ be your shalom, Christ be your shalom.*

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**SERVING YOU TODAY**

Rev. Dr. Sungho Lee  
Alexis Easton (8:30am), Worship Leader  
June Sullivan (11:00am), Worship Leader  
Dianne England, Guest conductor  
Monica Adams, Organist/Pianist  
David Campero, Livestream  
Mark Wharff & Steven Adams, Media  
Cherie Hudson, Facilities Coordinator  
Rupert Cooper, Audio

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**“I WILL SHOW YOU HOW TO FISH FOR PEOPLE”** Mark 1:14-20

We are reflecting on the vision statement of our annual conference: “Following Jesus, Thriving in Community, and Healing the World.” We have discussed on the meaning of following Jesus.

To follow Jesus, we have to bear our own crosses. We need to sacrifice our time, talent, treasure to testify Jesus. We made a new year’s resolution that we would give our time (attending to worship and meetings), talent (serving in committees and mission events), and treasure (tithing and giving pledges) to give testimony to God’s love for the world.

To thrive in a community, we need to know our community. We also pray for our community’s well-being and peace. Then we find one thing that we can do well in the community. As individuals, you have found ministry for the unhoused people, mentally ill, people with addictions, seniors, or youth and children. As a church, we have focused on education, music ministry, and being a community center.

Today and next week, we are going to reflect on healing the world. We will see how Jesus healed the world. Here is the Gospel text for today.

Jesus proclaimed that God’s Kingdom is here already. After John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee announcing God’s good news, saying, “Now is the time! Here comes God’s kingdom! Change your hearts and lives and trust this good news!”

Then Jesus saw two brothers, Simon and Andrew, throwing fishing nets into the sea, for they were fishermen. “Come, follow me,” he said, “and I’ll show you how to fish for people.” Right away, they left their nets and followed him. After going a little farther, he saw James and John, Zebedee’s sons, in their boat repairing the fishing nets. At that very moment he called them. They followed him, leaving their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired workers.

From this text, we can find four steps to heal the world.

1. Change your heart.
2. Change your lives.
3. Trust this good news.
4. Call people to follow Jesus.

### **Change your heart.**

First, we have to change our heart. Our hearts are full of anxieties, worries, fears, and anger. We do not know what is going to happen in the world. When we watch TV news, we feel that the world is going to end, and we cannot do anything for the world community. Those feelings come from our survival instinct. We have this fight, flight, and freeze instinct when we go through traumas in life.

Many of us have gone through life challenges. Loss of loved ones, relationship challenges, broken promises, unfulfilled dreams, and uncertain future have cornered us to do something that made us regret. Many times, we feel helpless and powerless without knowing why we are here and now.

The first step in healing the world is to change our hearts. In other words, we have to change our perspectives and views. Challenges in life are opportunities for us to grow and bear fruit. This statement would be hard to swallow but we have to accept it and face it. People usually say that what does not break us would make us strong. It is the same idea. In the Bible, we have many examples. Think about Joseph who was sold as slaves, imprisoned with false accusations, and forgotten for many years before he was summoned and became the prime minister of Egypt.

We must know that we are God's children. God has not forgotten us. Whatever we are going through, our lives are not done yet. All those crises and difficulties will be fertilizers for my fruits in life. Once we change our perspective on challenges, we should not lose heart and become fearful or angry.

The Lord is my shepherd, and I shall not want. What can separate us from the love of God? Nothing! God says, I will be with you, and I will walk with you. Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed. Read the Bible and meditate on those promises. Do not just read news articles and social media postings. Read the Bible to find out 365 promises that God makes for you and me. Memorize them and change your heart.

### **Change your lives.**

The second step is to change your lives. If you are using substances to feel better, quit them. Go to AA, FA, NA, SA meetings. If you feel desperate, find small groups or form small groups. Stay with people of faith and share their faith in small groups. Participate in their mission and ministries. Volunteer in the Family Promise, St. Mary's Community Services, Church committees, and Events. Make a financial plan for how to get out of debts. Make a personal plan for how to take time to do exercise. Act as if you are royal children of God's Kingdom. Keep your pride as God's children. Do not beg. Do not wander around. Be focused and disciplined. Tackle a job and finish it step by step and bit by bit. Say, "If pastor Lee can preach in English, I can do everything."

Learning a second language is difficult, but doable. It is doable but it takes long time and repetitive practice. We are born sinners and speaking negative language with negative accents. That is why we have anxieties, worries, fears, and anger. We fight or flight or freeze. That is our native accent. Unless we learn divine language as our second language, we speak fluently those sinful native languages. "I cannot do it." "It is not possible." "We will not make it." All those sentences are our sinful native languages. We need to learn how to say, "I can do it with God's help," "Nothing is impossible in God," "We will make it because God is with us." Some new vocabularies and accents should be practiced over and over again to be comfortable in saying these.

### **Trust this good news.**

We can get there with God. So many ancestors have proven it. So many fellow Christians have demonstrated it. We will be free from guilt and shame, fear and anger, worries and anxieties. Trust this good news and keep practicing it.

People will whisper in your ears that you cannot do it. You are helpless. You are done. You will not make it. However, those are not from God. Those words are from those who want to destroy you. They will attack you with all those negative remarks. But Jesus declared already. "Do not be afraid. I have won the victory."

## Call People to Follow Jesus

In the pursuit of global healing, our focus must shift to the transformative power of individual change. While the journey may be protracted, it stands as an unwavering method to mend the world. The metamorphosis of one person's heart and life serves as the catalyst for a broader societal transformation. Reflecting on our progress prompts contemplation: a century ago, slavery was accepted, and women were denied the right to vote. Today, we've evolved to reject the notion of owning others and strive for gender equality in various spheres. The march towards equality in terms of gender, race, and other societal divisions is ongoing. The paradigm shift occurs one person at a time, reminiscent of a transformational narrative akin to Charles Dickens' Scrooge or Dr. Seuss' Grinch.

Delving into the realm of quantum physics, a captivating parallel arises. Quantum entanglement, a peculiar phenomenon, describes particles linked in such a way that their destinies are intertwined, regardless of vast distances. This entanglement involves a shared quantum state, where the fate of one particle instantaneously influences the other. Though Einstein labeled it "spooky action at a distance," entanglement doesn't breach the speed of light; rather, it is a shared state, akin to a two-headed coin where both outcomes are determined simultaneously.

The analogy extends to the realm of human behavior. Altering one's attitude and thoughts generates a positive impact on others. This seemingly small change initiates a ripple effect, akin to the butterfly effect or the entanglement observed in quantum physics. Beyond mere human effort, it implies a divine will at work. Entrust in God and fulfill your role: maintain a pure heart, adhere to honest practices, and engage in acts of kindness, inviting others to join our Christian community. Through these collective efforts, we contribute to the healing of the world. May God bless all those engaged in these small acts of healing! Amen.



### WELCOME CENTER

If you are a visitor, please use this information for your convenience!

#### Sunday Schedule

8:30 am Worship Service at the Fireside Room in the Knoles Building in English

9:30 am Chancel Choir Rehearsal 9:30 am behind the Sanctuary choir room

10:15 am Worship Service at the Fireside Room in the Knoles Building in Cambodian language.

11:00 am Worship Service in the Sanctuary in English.

Childcare (under age 5) is available in the Knoles building. A friendly caregiver welcomes you!

Godly Play (leave 11 am service Following Children's Moment)

### SAVE THE DATE! FEBRUARY 4

Sunday, February 4<sup>th</sup>, Jeffrey Hall, former Minister of Central (2013-2019) will be preaching at both the 8:30am and 11:00am services. Fellowship Hour to follow the 11:00am service.

### OFFERING ENVELOPES

If you turned in a pledge card, you can pick up your offering envelopes in the Fellowship Hall on Sundays.

### SNAP JACKSON AND THE KNOCK ON WOOD PLAYERS

**SUNDAY, JANUARY 28** ~ Snap Jackson & the Knock On Wood Players return to Central Sunday, January 28. They will be performing during the 11.00am service. In addition, they will perform during the Chili Cook-Off. Jackson

will be joined by Shae Kalbach and Brian Clark.

*“Snap’s original songs have a liveliness that zips across the sound barrier, and if your feet aren’t dancing after a song or two you must be tied down.” ~ The Bluegrass Breakdown.*

This would be a great Sunday to invite a friend to worship with you.

### **THE ANNUAL CHILI COOK-OFF IS ALMOST HERE**

Come and join in on the fun at our Chili Cook-Off Sunday, January 28 at 12.15pm in the Fellowship Hall. Sample and vote on your favorite chilis provided by Central chefs! Listen to Snap Jackson perform and purchase raffle tickets or bid on an auction item. Tickets will be for sale after church this Sunday. There will be raffle and auction items.

Be sure to invite your friends to join you. The proceeds from this event will go to the Summer Youth Experience and the Gary Putnam Musical Enrichment Fund.

#### **Chili Chefs Needed**

Do you have an AMAZING chili recipe? Do you have a friend who you believe has the best chili? We hope you will sign up this Sunday to be one of the Chili Chefs for our Cook-Off. Chefs have the opportunity to enter their chili in one of the following categories: regular, hot, vegetarian and kids’ chili (ages 5-15). Each winner will receive a prize.

#### **Raffle and Auction Items Needed**

Do you have a cabin, or a time share in Hawaii or Mexico? Do you have gift cards that are not being used? Did you receive a gift that you would like to regift? Would you like to put together a gift basket? Do you have contacts with the Ports, UOP Basketball, Kings G-League consider asking them for a donation.

The Chili Cook-Off committee needs your creative help in donating items for the raffle and auction. Sign up today.

### **SUNDAY AFTERNOON BOOK GROUP**

The current book group read is *Where the Lost Wander* by Amy Harmon. In this epic and haunting love story set on the Oregon Trail, a family and their unlikely protector find their way through peril, uncertainty, and loss.

The next discussion date is Feb. 11th. Questions or comments contact Elaine [jbtaxe@gmail.com](mailto:jbtaxe@gmail.com).

### **LENT: A TIME FOR REFLECTION AND RENEWAL**

Lent is a 40-day period of solemn observance in the Christian calendar that comes before Easter. It's a time for reflection, repentance, and spiritual growth, commemorating the 40 days Jesus spent fasting and being tempted in the wilderness before beginning his public ministry.

Lent is a time for Christians to prepare their hearts and minds for the celebration of Easter, the holiest day in the Christian calendar. It's a reminder of Jesus' sacrifice and a call to follow his teachings. By taking time for reflection, repentance, and renewal, Christians can deepen their faith and prepare for the joy of Easter.

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, February 14<sup>th</sup>, and ends on Holy Saturday, March 28<sup>th</sup>, the day before Easter Sunday.

There are many ways Christians observe Lent, but some common practices include:

**Prayer and reflection:** Christians may spend more time in prayer and meditation, attending special church services, and reading scripture.

**Fasting and abstinence:** Many Christians choose to give up something they enjoy, such as meat, sweets, or social media, as a way to focus on their spiritual life. Others may choose to fast from food or drink for certain periods.

**Almsgiving:** Lent is a time to remember those in need and to practice generosity. Christians may donate to charity, volunteer their time, or perform acts of kindness for others.

Our church offers Adult Education Study (9:45-10:45 AM, Knoles Building Rm 6) and Small Group Bible Study (After 11 AM Worship, Fellowship).

**SAVE THE DATE FEB. 15, 2024**

71st annual interfaith tea at the Buddhist church. Sponsored by Community of Faith of San Joaquin County (Church Women United has reorganized to be more local and inclusive of all faiths.)

**SAVE THE DATE: FEBRUARY 29<sup>TH</sup> 2024!**

Rotary Read-In, 10:00 am - Cleveland and Team Charter Schools - Sign-ups will start in January.